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Frank Gannon announces his retirement from EMBO



Executive Director of EMBO, Professor Frank Gannon

Executive Director of EMBO, Professor Frank Gannon, has announced that he will retire from his position in mid-2007. At that time, he will have led EMBO for over 13 years, driving a period of significant expansion and development for the organisation.

Frank Gannon's directorship has seen a changing Europe, both scientifically and geographically. As Executive Director, he has worked to steer EMBO in line with these developments, raising the organisation's profile and enabling it to address the evolving needs of the molecular life sciences community. Appointed in 1994, Gannon today directs a considerably extended programme of activities ranging from training, professional development and networking to scientific publishing and policy advice. He also runs an active research group at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL).

In addition to expanding EMBO's established Fellowship and Courses & Workshops Programmes, Gannon has introduced career development initiatives such as the Young Investigator Programme and launched two new journals, EMBO reports and Molecular Systems Biology. Under his guidance, EMBO now pursues an active Science & Society Programme and plays an increasing advisory role in policy-making arenas, one example being its leadership in promoting the establishment of the European Research Council (ERC). Gannon's directorship has also seen EMBO offer special support to member states with less developed scientific infrastructures and opened up the organisation to greater interactions with scientists outside Europe.

All of these activities are supported by a close co-operation with the scientific community, one of Gannon's most notable achievements, according to Tim Hunt, Chair of the EMBO Council. "Frank's most significant legacy to EMBO will be the tremendous ties he has built up with the scientific community. Frank has brought the EMBO Members into every layer of the organisation's activities, ensuring that a strong network of scientific excellence lies behind all EMBO actions. Under Frank's energetic and intelligent leadership, EMBO's reputation and influence have never been higher."

Frank Gannon commented: "The decision to leave EMBO was a difficult one but comes at the right time in my career, giving me the opportunity to move on to a new challenge before I retire from science. Looking back I can reflect on many changes that were timely for EMBO and I am happy to have had the chance to deliver on them. I will leave the organisation with the confidence that it holds a central and relevant position in European research. With a strong EMBO team in Heidelberg and the energetic engagement of the EMBO Members, I'm sure that EMBO will continue to serve the life sciences in Europe for many years to come."

Gannon's retirement comes at an appropriate point in EMBO's evolution. In 2006, the EMBO Council agreed on a ten-year strategy for the organisation and in 2007, EMBO's funding body, the EMBC, will start preparations for a new multi-annual budget agreement. The search for a new Executive Director to lead EMBO into this next phase of its development is already under way.

Press
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